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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2573
INFO AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
DARFUR COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 001825

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: PINR PGOV PREL KPKO UN AU SU
SUBJECT: CHADIAN REBELS - LEADERSHIP, GOS INFLUENCE, AND
BACKGROUND ON TOLLIMI

REF: A. STATE 129300
1B. KHARTOUM 01597

Classified By: A/CDA Mark Asquino, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The following is a response to SECSTATE 129300.

CHADIAN OPPOSITION: SUSTAINABLE COALITION OR FLAWED?

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¶2. (C) "IS THE FINAL LEADERSHIP BODY OF THE UNITED CHADIAN REBEL FRONT (THE PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENTS, PARLIAMENT, MINISTERS) WIDELY ACCEPTED AMONG THE REBEL LEADERSHIP AND RANK-AND-FILE SO THAT WE CAN EXPECT A SUSTAINABLE COALITION, OR IS THE PROCESS VIEWED AS SOMEHOW FLAWED SO THAT WE CAN EXPECT MORE IN-FIGHTING?" (reftel A)

¶3. (C) The Chadian rebels have not yet decided upon a leadership body, and Post believes that they have not yet transformed themselves into a sustainable coalition. Although the Chadian rebels signed a general political agreement (available on UFCD's website) the week of December 14, the opposition has not reached consensus on who should lead their movement, politically or militarily. Additionally, it now appears the very process of electing a leader has led to an impasse. Although on December 20 Abaker Tollimi told poloff once again that he expects the Chadian rebels to agree on the rules for an election by the end of the month, the Chadian rebels have been haggling over election procedures for months. Tollimi further warned that RFC's Timane Erdimi and UFDD's Mahamat Nouri are becoming increasingly frustrated with the leadership and political struggles within the rebel movements. "Erdimi is ready for war, Nouri is afraid of elections, and it is not clear how this is all going to be resolved," stated Tollimi. As in earlier meetings, Tollimi repeated that if the five leaders are unable to agree upon someone to lead their movement, then the second tier of leaders (which includes himself) should be considered as alternates.

INFLUENCE OF SUDANESE GOVERNMENT

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¶4. (C) "IS THERE ANY INFORMATION THAT CONFIRMS/DENIES WHETHER SUDAN IS ATTEMPTING TO PREVENT ANY CHADIAN REBEL ATTACKS THIS YEAR OR IS CONSIDERING PULLING MATERIAL SUPPORT TO THE REBELS IF THEY CANNOT GET THEIR ACT TOGETHER AND SELECT A SINGLE LEADER?" (reftel A)

¶5. (C) As reported in reftel B, Sudanese Intelligence Chief Gosh told us on November 2 that Sudan would not allow "any attacks on Chad from Sudanese territory from now until the end of the year." Although Gosh appears to have held to his promise, this may have been one of the GoS's easier pledges to keep. (The fragmentation of the Chadian rebels prevented any successful attack, and the GoS has attempted to demonstrate its cooperation with the international community with the ICC's looming announcement of a possible indictment

against President Bashir.)

¶6. (C) Chadian rebel leaders in Khartoum have stated that the Government of Sudan threatened to cut off support to the Chadian rebels unless they can agree on a single leader. Despite this threat, according to a number of the rebels, the GoS has not given them a deadline for this process, nor expressed its own preferences. Chadian rebels reported that this represents a change to previous GoS unification efforts, as the GoS on prior occasions made known its own interests in the selection process. Rather than the GoS's removing its support, should the rebels remain fragmented, Post expects that in early 2009 the GoS will increase its pressure on the Chadian rebels and set a deadline for the election process. Post further believes the GoS will continue to keep its proxy forces (including the Chadian rebels) as close as possible, should it need to flex its muscles against Chad and the international community as a whole.

BACKGROUND ON UFDD'S ABAKER TOLLIMI

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¶7. (C) "ANALYSTS WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION ON HIS ETHNICITY AND HOW IT MIGHT HELP/HURT HIM IF HE IS TRYING TO RISE TO THE TOP OF THE REBEL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE. WE THINK HE IS HALF ZAGHAWA (MOTHER) AND HALF GORANE (FATHER). WHEN HE INITIALLY JOINED THE REBELLION, HE WAS CONSIDERED A ZAGHAWA REBEL, BUT WE CAN IMAGINE THAT IF HE FEELS CLOSER TO MAHAMAT NOURI, HE WOULD EMPHASIZE HIS GORANENESS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY MORE INFORMATION ON WHICH ZAGHAWA SUB-CLAN HE IS RELATED TO, WHY HE HAS NEVER JOINED FORCES WITH FELLOW

ZAGHAWA TIMAN ERDIMI, AND WHETHER HE HAS FAMILY TIES WITH THE DEBY REGIME (WE THINK HE IS THE UNCLE OF FORMER FINANCE MINISTER ABBAS TOLLI)." (reftel A)

¶8. (C) When asked about his ethnicity, Abaker Tollimi told Poloff without hesitation on December 20, that he is Gorane. Poloff then asked about the ethnicity of his parents, to which Tollimi admitted that his mother is one-half Zaghawa (of the Bideyat clan), and one-half Gorane, and his father is one-hundred percent Gorane. Tollimi said he is from the Fada region, populated largely by the Borogat. He said that like most of the people in this region, he speaks both Zaghawa and Gorane - something he considers an asset in uniting the people of Chad. When asked whether he identified with his Zaghawa roots, Tollimi responded, "I am glad that I speak Zaghawa, but the Zaghawa will not play a major role in any new government in Chad." He then stated that if there is a regime change in Chad, the Sudanese Zaghawa ("except for the refugees") will be forced to leave Chad. Tollimi noted that RFC leader Timane Erdimi from the Zaghawa tribe will not be able to offer an appropriate leader for either the Chadian rebels or any future Government in Chad. Tollimi said that his father was the Sultan of the Borogat, and that after his father's death, his older brother, Widay Tollimi, assumed that role. He said that another older brother, Muhammad Tollimi (now deceased,) married President Deby's sister and had two children. One of these children, Abbas Muhammad Tollimi, was the former Minister of Finance in President Deby's regime. Tollimi stated, "I am related only by my brother's marriage, not blood, to President Deby, and I differ greatly from my nephew on political issues." Forty-four year old Tollimi is married and has six children --four boys and two girls. He lives in Khartoum with his wife and their children.

ASQUINO